

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An interactive system for providing information to patients in a medical setting comprising:

at least one video display unit located within a medical setting;

a list of available programs for viewing by a patient;

a manual device for entering a program number selected from said list by said patient;

an electronic device containing a plurality of video files connected to said at least one video display so that a program selected by said patient using said manual device is provided by said electronic device to said at least one video display unit; and

means for changing and updating said video files on said electronic device.

2. An interactive system according to claim 1, wherein said changing and updating means is external to said medical setting.

3. An interactive system according to claim 1, wherein said changing and updating means is internal to said medical setting.

4. An interactive system according to claim 1, wherein said electronic device maintains a log of each program selected by said viewer.

5. An interactive system according to claim 4, wherein said changing and updating means comprises means for accessing data in said log maintained by said electronic device.

6. An interactive system according to claim 4, further comprising said changing and updating means communicating with said electronic device via a satellite link.

7. An interactive system according to claim 4, further comprising said changing and updating means communicating

with said electronic device via at least one of a telephone line and a terrestrial line.

8. An interactive system according to claim 4, wherein said changing and updating means comprises an electronic device located at a location remote from said medical setting.

9. An interactive system according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of video files on said electronic device include video programs about at least one of medical news, medical illustrations, product education, medical conditions, and healthcare information.

10. An interactive system according to claim 9, wherein at least some of said video programs contain advertisements for medical products and instructions for taking such medical products.

11. An interactive system according to claim 1, wherein said list of available programs comprises an on-screen display of said available programs.

12. An interactive system according to claim 1, further comprising a user interface containing said list of available programs and said manual device.

13. An interactive system according to claim 12, further comprising said manual device comprising a remote control device having a keypad, touchpad, mouse or keyboard.

14. An interactive system according to claim 1, further comprising said at least one video display unit comprising at least one television monitor located within a patient examining room in said medical setting.

15. An interactive system according to claim 1, further comprising said at least one video display unit comprising at least one television monitor located within a hospital.

16. An interactive system according to claim 1, further comprising said at least one video display unit comprising at least one television monitor located in a pharmacy setting.

17. An interactive system according to claim 14, wherein said medical setting has a plurality of patient

examining/consultation rooms and said system includes a television monitor in each of said examining/consultation rooms.

18. An interactive system according to claim 17, further comprising each said television monitor being connected to said electronic device.

19. An interactive system according to claim 1, further comprising a plurality of video display units in said medical setting and said electronic device having a capability to provide the same program content to each of said video display units.

20. An interactive system according to claim 1, wherein said list of available programs comprises a list of channels and a program associated with each of said channels.

21. An interactive program according to claim 1, wherein said manual device comprises a device for generating an infrared signal and said at least one video display unit has means for receiving said infrared signal and for

transmitting said infrared signal to said electronic device.

22. An interactive system according to claim 1, having an automatic turn-on feature and an automatic turn-off feature.

23. An interactive method for providing healthcare information to an individual, said method comprising the steps of:

locating a video display unit within an examination/consultation room in a medical setting;

connecting an electronic device located externally of said examination room and containing a plurality of video files to said video display unit;

providing a list of said video files available for viewing by said individual and a device for accessing said video files; and

displaying a video file selected by said individual.

24. A method according to claim 23, further comprising:

    said locating step comprising locating a plurality of video display units in a plurality of examination/consultation rooms; and

    said connecting step comprises connecting said electronic device to each of said video display units.

25. A method according to claim 23, further comprising storing on said electronic device a plurality of video files relating to health conditions, medical illustrations, healthcare products and medicines, and medical news.

26. A method according to claim 23, further comprising updating said video files on said electronic device from another electronic device located remote from said medical setting.

27. A method according to claim 26, wherein said updating step comprises updating said video files via a satellite link.

28. A method according to claim 26, wherein said updating step comprises updating said video files via a telephone line.

29. A method according to claim 26, wherein said updating step comprises updating said video files via a portable electronic device.

30. A method according to claim 23, further comprising maintaining a log of video files viewed by said individuals on said electronic device.

31. A method according to claim 30, further comprising periodically downloading information maintained in said log to a remote device for analysis of said information.

32. A method according to claim 23, wherein said list and device providing step comprises providing a user interface containing said list of available video files and a remote control to said individual.

33. A method for gathering information about health care programs viewed by patients in a medical setting comprising:

locating at least one video display unit within at least one examination/consultation room in said medical setting;

connecting an electronic device containing a plurality of video files to each said video display unit;

providing a list of said video files to a patient and a device for accessing said video files;

displaying a video file selected by said patient; and

maintaining a log of each selected video file on said electronic device.

34. A method according to claim 33, further comprising gathering information about viewed programs by accessing said log via another electronic device.

35. A method according to claim 34, further comprising utilizing said gathered information to compute an amount due from at least one of advertisers and sponsors.